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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0009

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 0016

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ASEC, AR
SUBJECT: DISAPPEARANCE OF MONTONERO LEADER ROBERTO QUIETO

1. ROBERTO QUIETO, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE MONTONEROS MOVEMENT, DISAPPEARED DEC 20 FROM A LOCAL BEACH WHERE HE WAS RELAXING WITH HIS FAMILY. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HE WAS TAKEN WITHOUT A STRUGGLE BY APPROXIMATELY 8 YOUNG MEN, ONE OF WHOM REPORTEDLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS "SUBINSPECTOR ROSAS." ALTHOUGH A LEADER OF THE OUTLAWED MONTONEROS, THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC CHARGES PENDING AGAINST QUIETO AND SO FAR AS IS KNOWN NO WARRANT FOR HIS ARREST. QUIETO'S WHEREABOUTS REMAIN A MYSTERY AND FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL POLICE DENY THAT THEY HAVE HIM IN CUSTODY. QUIETO'S WIFE WAS FILED FOUR HABEAS CORPUS PETITIONS WITH VARIOUS AUTHORITIES, NONE OF WHICH HAS, AS YET, BEEN ANSWERED.

2. PRESS SOURCES HAVE SUGGESTED ERRONEOUSLY THAT THE NIGHT OF THE DISAPPEARANCE REAL NEWS AGENCY RECEIVED A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE MONTONEROS DENOUNCING QUIETO'S DISAPPEARANCE. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO DISCREDIT ONE THEORY ABOUT THIS DISAPPEARANCE THAT HAS BEEN MENTIONED: THAT HE WAS "DETAINED" BY THE MONTONEROS THEMSELVES IN AN INTERNAL DISPUTE.

3. COMMENT: MOST OBSERVERS FEEL THAT QUIETO WAS ABDUCTED BY THE POLICE AND/OR RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS

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(DEAD, TRIPLE A) AND IS PROBABLY DEAD. THE PRESENT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HIS FATE, HOWEVER, RAISES A DISTURBING POSSIBILITY. RECENT MILITARY AND POLICE ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES HAVE RESULTED IN THE CAPTURE OF A NUMBER OF TERRORISTS WHOM THE GUERRILLAS MIGHT WELL WANT BACK OR WHOSE FATE THEY MIGHT WISH CLARIFIED FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES--AS IN THE CUBAN CASE. THEREFORE, THE GUERRILLAS MIGHT LOGICALLY BE LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE KIDNAPPING TARGETS FOR AN EXCHANGE. AS A RESULT, NERVOUSNESS IN THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IS HIGHER THAN USUAL.
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